

From: Rhoda E Schollars
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 11/19/01 6:34pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

I am attaching my comments written in my last Microsoft program.
Because of the problems I had with FrontPage and bCentral I am filing
a complaint with the FTC for bait and switch. Someone needs to do
something to protect the American public if you won't.

If you don't want to do your job, why don't you quit and find another one? The software companies opposing Gates have lawyers, Gates has his lawyers, you were supposed to be my lawyer. Your job is to protect your employer, the American taxpayer but with the "settlement" you abandoned your responsibility.

What you have done is given Microsoft permission to destroy small businesses everywhere. I'm a small businesswoman and Bill Gates' tentacles are reaching out and squeezing the life out of me. Three examples should hopefully explain why I am so upset. They should also illustrate the inherent danger of any monopoly, like the one you are sanctioning.

First, I love a word processing program called WordPerfect because it let's me do everything that I want to do. I can't use it any longer because Bill Gates makes it impossible to use. I know you're saying that WordPerfect still exists--but that doesn't matter, I can't use it. Most people use the grossly inferior product put out by Microsoft called Word and then only because it is bundled in with other Microsoft products. If I used WordPerfect I could not exchange my documents with Word users--including Outlook users, etc. I would be cutting myself off from clients, friends, etc who use Word.

Years ago Bill Gates apparently admitted his and his employees' incompetence when he stated that Word just couldn't read WordPerfect. That was a crock then as it is now since they could have found a way. There were a lot of bridges that independent shareware producers had created between Word and WordPerfect. Gates just wanted to destroy WordPerfect, which is what he has done. So what is the result to the American public? We're stuck with a program full of glitches that is slowly dumbing down the American public. As a joke I typed in some famous American documents including the Gettysburg Address. I remember that document specifically since Word declared it to be riddled with errors and faulted it for having many "long sentences." In fact, I just ran spell check and it didn't recognize Gettysburg but it did recognize Microsoft.

Second, I had an account through bCentral for a website. I have canceled the account since I have reached my frustration level with the site and Microsoft's products. The site was created using a site manager that was exclusive to Microsoft. It took me a good day to master using the manager and then another day to get the site up. Microsoft decided it couldn't leave well enough alone and did away with the site manager. It sent me a "free" copy of FrontPage so that I was forced to use it, which meant spending another day or two learning another program. Well, I had problems almost from the start. First, the program caused RealPlayer to crash twice. Then all non-Microsoft products starting glitching in small ways--e.g. pop up boxes on the Internet would not work unless they were Microsoft's.

Then I imported my website into the program so I could edit it. There is obviously something that I did wrong or there is a problem with the program since all links

showed except "Home". It's hard to put out a website when the reader can't go home whenever they want. I read and re-read their instructions but nothing worked. So I contacted Microsoft and asked for help. Their response, "Read the book". I did that again and still couldn't do anything. Finally I decided I'd live with no link to Home and published the site. Well, it ate my site. I tried to contact Microsoft again and no response. So I threatened to cancel my account. Then I got the offer of support for \$35. This is on a product that they forced me to use when they unilaterally did away with the site manager and forced me to use FrontPage. Obviously they are too big to care if their products work or not--another problem with monopolies.

Finally, Microsoft is "partnered" with Intuit, which produces low-end accounting software including Quickbooks. Quickbooks is used by many small business people to do their books and this low-end monopoly generates a lot of money for Intuit since they do the Microsoft shuffle. They create inferior products and then do "upgrades". My question is, why do they need to do so many upgrades if their products were good to begin with? They do the "upgrades" for one reason and that is to force people to purchase the "upgraded" product. You see, their products don't read up, only down. In other words, when my clients do their books on a Quickbooks upgrade produced after the one that I have, I cannot read it. So I have to upgrade whether I want to or not. The same is true of regular Microsoft products--they read down but not up. We're forced to continually buy "upgraded" products, which to me means that the initial products were inferior. If there was competition a company couldn't do that. They'd have to get it right the first time or their competitors would put them out of business.

All these problems develop because of monopolies and you're doing nothing to stop Microsoft. And they are costing me time and money.

If the problem is the Windows operating system and Gate's control of Windows, you need to split it off into a separate company. Either that or make it a public utility, like the electric company. Pay them royalties but take it out of their control. Then they'd have to compete on a level playing field and I have the feeling that Bill Gates would fail since his products are inferior to those of his competitors. He just controls Windows and can force the public to use the crap that he produces.